

RHODE ISLAND STATE LAW LIBRARY POLICY STATEMENT

FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

In order to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and to provide meaningful access to all library patrons, the Rhode Island State Law Library establishes the following policy:

Provision of Accommodations and Auxiliary Aids and Services

The State Law Library will make all reasonable efforts, including working with the Department of Administration and the Office of Library and Information Services, in meeting the needs of patrons with disabilities who wish written materials converted to alternative formats, or who request auxiliary aids or services. In addition, the State Law Library will be responsive to requests for auxiliary aids and services; these may be either purchased or borrowed by the State Law Library.

Primary consideration will be given to the request as made, unless another equally effective means of communication is available, or if the means requested would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of the services, programs, or activities or in undue financial and administrative burdens. The decision to not grant the request for an auxiliary aid or service because it would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of the program or undue financial and administrative burden must be made in writing by the State Court Administrator. All resources available for the use in the funding and operation of the State Law Library must be considered in making the decision. The State Law Library must take some action that would ensure, to the maximum extent possible, that individuals with disabilities receive the benefits or services provided by the State Law Library.

To request written materials in alternate formats, such as Braille or cassettes, or auxiliary aids, such as sign language interpreters or assistive listening devices, patrons should contact:

State Law Librarian
Rhode Island State Law Library
250 Benefit Street, 8th Floor
Providence, Rhode Island 02903
Telephone (401) 222-3275 (voice), Fax (401) 222-3865, or TTY (401) 222-3269
[Voice number can also be accessed by TTY users through
RI RELAY at 7-1-1 or 1-800-745-5555, as TTY machine is on 3rd Floor.]

The request for materials in alternate formats or other types of auxiliary aids should be made at a reasonable time period before the aid or service is needed. For example, if a person who is deaf or hard-of-hearing requests a sign language or oral interpreter, the request should be made, if possible, at least five business days before the interpreter is needed, but preferably three weeks in advance.

Accommodating Patrons with Impairments

Accommodating Patrons with Low Vision

While large print legal materials are not generally available from standard commercial sources, the State Law Library staff will make every effort to assist patrons with low vision by: (1) Locating relevant materials; (2) reading selected portions of the text; (3) assisting with the photocopying of materials too lengthy to read in the library by employing an enlargement mode on the library's photocopiers; (4) directing to or assisting with the use of the TeleSensory Chroma CCD and CCTV system (which enlarges texts); (5) directing to or assisting with the use of the Freedom Scientific's Open Book 6.0 (which translates text into voice through a scanner); and (6) directing or assisting with the use of Freedom Scientific's JAWS for Windows (a screen reader which makes computer programs accessible through voice for persons with visual impairments).

Accommodating Patrons Who Are Blind

Legal materials in Braille are not generally available from standard commercial sources; however, the State Law Library staff will make all reasonable efforts to assist blind patrons in using library materials. These efforts may include: (1) Locating relevant materials; (2) reading relevant portions of the text; (3) photocopying relevant materials desired by the patron; (4) directing to or assisting with the use of the Freedom Scientific's Open Book 6.0 (which translates text into voice through a scanner); and (5) directing or assisting with the use of Freedom Scientific's JAWS for Windows (a screen reader which makes computer programs accessible through voice for persons with visual impairments).

If patrons with visual impairments do not find the above-mentioned services sufficient, they may follow the procedures outlined previously to request written materials in alternate formats or other auxiliary aids and services.

Accommodating Patrons Who Are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing or Have Communication Impairments

The State Law Library staff shall provide assistance to patrons who are deaf or hard-of-hearing or have communication impairments. The State Law Library staff will make every effort to communicate with such patrons by (1) using clearly articulated speech to communicate with those who read lips; (2) employing written dialogue in lieu of oral dialogue; and (3) when communication is complex and lengthy, providing (at the library's expense) a sign language or oral interpreter, if requested by the patron.

If patrons who are deaf or hard-of-hearing or who have communication impairments wish to request an auxiliary aid, such as a sign language interpreter or assistive listening device (such as a Williams Sound PockeTalker Pro), they may follow the procedures outlined in the above section "Provision of Accommodations and Auxiliary Aids and Services" to request the sign language interpreter or other auxiliary aids or services.

Patrons who are deaf or hard-of-hearing or have communication impairments and use TDD/TTY devices may also communicate with the State Law Library staff by contacting them through the telecommunications device for the deaf/text telephone (TDD/TTY) at (401) 222-3269 (3rd Floor/Room 304) and/or the 8th Floor/Library facsimile machine (401) 222-3865. TTY users may also use RI RELAY at 7-1-1 (TTY) or 1-800-745-5555 to access (401) 222-3275 (voice) (8th Floor).

Accommodating Patrons with Mobility Impairments

The State Law Library is accessible to persons with mobility impairments. While both the 8th and 9th floors are accessible by elevator, security concerns dictate that persons with mobility impairments inform the State Law Library staff that access to the 9th floor is desired so that doors may be opened. If direct access to the 9th floor is not required, the State Law Library staff shall retrieve desired materials from that floor.

The State Law Library staff shall assist patrons with mobility impairments with the retrieval of materials on upper shelves of all stacks to guarantee effective access to all parts of the collection.

Prohibition Against Providing Legal Advice

In assisting lay or pro se patrons with disabilities, the State Law Library staff shall exercise caution to ensure that the reference assistance provided does not constitute legal advice. State Law Library staff shall inform such patrons that the selection of some relevant materials does not guarantee that all relevant materials have been located or that the solution to the patron's particular legal problem is necessarily contained therein.

Signage and Notice

Appropriate signage shall direct those patrons with disabilities to the reference desk for appropriate assistance. Patrons with visual impairments shall be assisted by oral means. Copies and audiotapes of this policy will be made available at the State Law Library information desk.

Questions or Complaints

If you have any questions about this policy or wish to file a complaint concerning the accessibility of the State Law Library programs to individuals with disabilities, please contact:

Gail Higgins Fogarty, Esquire
State Courts ADA Deputy Coordinator
Five Hill Street
Pawtucket, Rhode Island 02860
Telephone (401) 722-4059 (voice)
TTY users through RI RELAY at 7-1-1 or 1-800-745-5555
Fax (401) 721-2653